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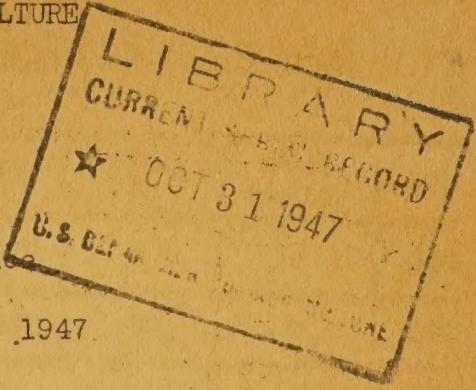
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U.S. Extension Service

EXTENSION SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Report
of
Native Lamb Improvement Conference
Held at
Jackson's Mill, W. Va., June 24-27, 1947.



The conference held at Jackson's Mill, W. Va., June 24 to 27, 1947, on the general subject of native lamb improvement, was a revival of a series of such conferences interrupted by World War II. Invitation to meet in West Virginia this year was renewed by Director J. O. Knapp, of the West Virginia Extension Service, and relayed to the States concerned by Director M. L. Wilson, of the Federal Extension Service.

A total of 50 persons were in attendance from 11 States and the District of Columbia. They included extension and research workers in both production and marketing and also representatives of public and private service agencies. A complete list of those in attendance is included in this report.

Approximately equal time was given to production and marketing problems at the conference and a lamb-grading school and a half-day tour to visit nearby livestock farms were included in the program. (Copy of program attached.)

Practically all program speakers distributed literature pertinent to their subjects at the conference. Such material is not included in this report.

Committees were appointed at the opening of the conference to prepare reports on lamb production, lamb marketing, and wool. These reports, which were adopted at the close of the conference, are included in this report.

Two of the principal talks made at the conference--those by Don S. Bell, of the Ohio Experiment Station, and C. A. Burmeister, of USDA--have been mimeographed and are enclosed with this report.

At the close of the conference a committee consisting of B. F. Creech, Paul L. Fletcher, C. W. Hammons, C. P. McClaugherty, R. C. Miller, and C. D. Lowe was appointed to make plans for a similar conference to be held in 1948 at which it was proposed that other livestock be included.

Data on the Lambs Used in the Grading School and Their Carcasses

No.	Lamb grade	Live wt.	Carcass hot wt.	% Hot	Chilled wt.	Chilled	Carcass grade
338	C	74	39.00	52.70	38.25	51.69	C
346	C-	78	43.75	56.09	42.50	54.48	C-
358	C	90	48.25	53.61	47.00	52.22	C+
339	G-	70	35.75	51.07	35.50	50.71	C-
343	G	92	46.50	50.54	46.00	50.00	G
347	G-	88	39.25	44.06	38.25	43.46	G-
341	M	60	29.00	48.33	28.25	47.08	Com.
348	M+	78	42.75	54.80	41.50	53.20	Com.+
355	M	70	32.50	46.43	31.50	45.00	Util. +

Price:

(C) Blue - \$22.50
 (G) Red - 18.00
 (M) Med. - 14.00

Report of Committee on Lamb Production
L. I. Case, ChairmanBREEDING

Fertility, fecundity, and adaptability are the keystones to profitable sheep raising. The place to start improvement is with the ram. He should be from a flock with a good production record. He should be unrelated to the ewes and preferably of a different breed from the ewes.

Ewes: Important factors in selection of ewes are vigor and milk production.

Crossbreeding is recommended for market lamb production. Northwestern Hampshire-Rambouillet crossbred ewes have proved satisfactory in many of the Eastern and Southeastern States. Southdown rams used on these ewes have produced top market lambs. Southdown rams should not be used if the ewe lambs are to be kept for breeding purposes. The next best source of replacement ewes to Hampshire-Rambouillet crosses is West Texas Rambouillet ewes or Rambouillet-Columbia or Corriedale crossbreds.

FEEDING

Sheep raising is profitable in proportion to the time the sheep can be kept grazing permanent and annual pastures.

Winter feeding should be sufficient to keep the ewes in strong vigorous condition.

Silage can safely take a prominent place in winter rations without resulting in "soft" lambs.

MANAGEMENT

Internal parasites in sheep can be controlled with individual treatments of phenothiazine in the fall and spring, supplemented with phenothiazine-salt mixture 1 to 9 during the grazing season. When lambs show signs of unthriftiness treat them individually.

External parasites of sheep can be controlled by using $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of 5 percent rotenone to 100 gallons of water with no wetting agent. Four pounds of DDT, 50 percent, to 100 gallons of water is also satisfactory. Either of these can be used as a spray or a dip. Rotenone dust is best for the dry treatment.

Docking and Castrating: Producers have become slack about docking and castrating during the war years. It is important that these practices be re-emphasized as things get back to normal and the market becomes more discriminating.

Wool will probably play a more important part in the income from sheep raising as time goes on. This country should produce a higher percentage of our wool needs than it is now doing.

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Heavy Lambs: Wartime experience and the work of the National Livestock and Meat Board indicates that the market in the future can use heavier lambs than we formerly thought.

4-H sheep club work is an important project. It results in getting more young folks interested in sheep raising through learning to like rather than dislike them.

Report of Committee on Lamb Marketing

C. W. Hammans, D. H. Willard, G. P. Summers, Chairman

The following summary of the major points of interest regarding the marketing phases of the conference was drawn from the discussion from the floor as well as from prepared speeches:

The outlook for sheep and lambs is favorable. The high level of domestic employment, accompanied by a high level of consumer incomes, is resulting in a strong domestic demand for lamb meat. Furthermore, the strong foreign demand for meats, the relatively high prices of other meats, the small 1947 lamb crop, and the strong demand for breeding stock are additional factors that will continue to contribute to the favorable outlook of sheep and lambs. Also worthy of note is the fact that sheep numbers in this country are at the lowest levels on record and it will necessarily require several years to rebuild flocks. Many of these factors indicate that lamb production may be favorable relative to other meat animals for several years.

A major problem in a sound marketing program centers on proper grading of live lambs. Proper and adequate grading of lambs can and does have considerable influence on the quality of lambs coming to the market, and it influences the price level at a given market as well as the price received by a given producer at that market. Considerable evidence points toward a lack of uniformity of grading between States as well as between markets within the same State. Lamb grading in the States represented is done by State departments of agriculture, commission men, auction market operators, Extension Service representatives, and in some cases by farmers. It is obvious, therefore that uniform grade standards may well have a wide variety of interpretations and applications by such an assortment of graders.

Uniform grading according to well-defined standards throughout the entire group of native sheep States would facilitate the development of improved marketing programs, provide a sound basis for improvements in quality lamb production, and increase the effectiveness of an educational program both at the producer and consumer levels.

A second important problem to lamb production and marketing is the fact that at present 24 percent of the consumers in this country cannot buy lamb meat over the retail counter. The factors contributing to this condition are scarcity of lamb meat, lack of acceptance of lamb by some merchants as well as by many consumers, and the lack of uniformity of flavors and quality of lamb meat. Carcass grading, prepackaging, and more satisfactory methods of cutting the carcass into retail cuts are expected to go far in correcting this situation and will tend to develop consumer acceptance in areas now consuming relatively small quantities of lamb meat.

Several systems or methods of marketing lambs were discussed that could be adapted to most areas but no one method was designated as the best method. Improvements in lamb marketing require active participation by farmer groups and an understanding of the problems involved, to the degree that the producers are willing to make changes, both in production and in marketing practices, necessary to improve the entire lamb marketing program.

A good marketing program for live lambs will, in a long period, return the largest amount of total money to the producer. The marketing process should provide a means of proving or disproving the values of the various production practices. The lamb pools in Ohio have demonstrated that a good marketing program is the proving ground of recommended production practices.

A good marketing program needs to be supplemented by an educational program carried out by the graders, farmer committees, Extension Service, and other agencies.

Report of Committee on Wool

L. A. Kauffman - L. K. Bear

Domestic wool producers are on the anxious seat. They are worried over two possibilities. One is that the support program will not be continued and that the Commodity Credit Corporation will dump its holdings of more than 450,000,000 pounds, thus forcing prices below current levels. The other is that tariff concessions may be made at the Geneva Conference lowering the duty on foreign wools. Both of these factors have contributed to a definite lack of interest in domestic offerings since the expiration of the wool program on April 16.

The wool industry is sick the world over. Surpluses are a problem in all important producing countries. The British Wool Disposals Board, more familiarly known as the Joint Organization, or J. O., has done a rather competent job of moving wools. Since 1945 approximately one-half of the surplus Empire wools have been disposed of.. This activity is largely due to an actual shortage of choice fine wools and what amounts to a virtual monopoly of them by the J. O. It is claimed that England and her dominions control 85 percent of the fine wools of the world exclusive of those produced in the United States. Prices of the better grades of fine wools in Australia show an increase of more than 50 percent since last fall. Here at home prices of wool have advanced only 13 percent since 1941. Medium wools are in strong supply but are meeting with indifferent demand. Fabric changes in the near future may bring about an adjustment in this condition. South American and New Zealand 3/8 and 1/4 blood grades have offered better buys to manufacturers than our domestics of similar grade and quality.

In many national magazines and metropolitan newspapers numerous articles and editorials deeply critical of a wool-support program have appeared. Most of them show a biased viewpoint, and unfair conclusions are drawn. If the tariff were removed from wool it is doubtful that clothing prices would be reduced. Returns to foreign growers would probably be increased in an amount sufficient to offset the present duty. Actually the cost of the raw material in a suit of clothes is rather small. Only 8 to 10 pounds of grease wool is required, representing an expenditure of not more than \$5. If wool prices advanced 10 cents a pound, a suit would cost only 80 cents to \$1 more than it does now.

Estimates indicate that the wool program from 1943 through 1946 will cost the government about 90 million dollars. That seems like a huge sum, yet duties collected last year on imports of foreign wools amounted to more than 120 million dollars. As a matter of fact, a fairly large part of the receipts from the tariff on wool for years has gone to support the price for other agricultural products. The expense of a wool-support program may in the end be far less expensive than for this country to become largely dependent upon foreign sources for her supplies.

Months of effort on the part of wool-grower representatives came to naught when the Wool Bill was vetoed. But some kind of wool-support program will certainly be put into effect in the near future. It is claimed that the President has the power to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to extend the 1946 program. This may be done in event Congress does not pass a bill acceptable to the administration. (Congress did enact a bill which was signed by the President.
--Editor)

Handlers are of the opinion that something will be done shortly, for they were recently called to Washington to review a proposed new contract. This provides for an increase in handling charges for both the C.C.C. and the handlers. There will be no limitations on the size of clips purchased in the future.

The C.C.C. will withhold 1 cent per pound of the handling charge until the wools are sold, instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ cent. This presumably is to speed up sales and reduce storage charges. The C.C.C. charge will be $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound instead of the $1\frac{1}{8}$ cents charged since the program began.

Further changes include the core testing of all lots of wool over 10,000 pounds in weight with the provision that lots smaller than that may be cored upon request. To encourage better preparation there is a provision for a differential of 5 to 7 cents per pound, clean bases, for skirted wools. Changes are also made in price schedules on the various grades and classes to make them more in line with their relative values. Short-fibered wools are valued on a lower basis to make them more competitive.

The C.C.C. program, because it has guaranteed a market for wool, has reduced margins, removed the danger of losses, and made it more difficult for cooperatives to show their usual advantage over outright sales to country buyers. Under a support program cooperatives will be forced to extend their operations into such fields as sorting, scouring, and the manufacture of wool tops. By doing this they may capture additional margins, increase returns, and thereby hold or expand their membership.

Persons Attending the Conference

Washington, D. C.

C. D. Lowe, Extension Service, USDA
 Paul L. Fletcher, Extension Service, USDA
 Benjamin Schwartz, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA
 C. A. Burmeister, Production and Marketing Administration, USDA
 C. B. Denman, National Association of Food Chains
 Fred J. Beard, Production and Marketing Administration, USDA

Connecticut

D. C. Gaylord, Extension Service, Storrs

Tennessee

William P. Tyrell, Extension Service, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
 Paul P. Hite, Sheep Specialist, University of Tennessee, Nashville

North Carolina

L. I. Case, Extension Service, North Carolina State College, Raleigh
 John E. Foster, Department of Animal Husbandry, Raleigh
 Harry Hamilton, Marketing Specialist, Department of Agriculture, Boone

New York

Geo. R. Johnson, Extension Service, Cornell University, Ithaca

Michigan

Graydon Blank, Extension Service, Michigan State College, East Lansing

Kentucky

Richard C. Miller, Sheep Specialist, University of Kentucky, Lexington
G. P. Summers, Department of Markets, University of Kentucky, Lexington

Virginia

M. Lester Dalton, Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute
C. P. McClaugherty, Division of Markets, Narrows
J. H. Meek, Division of Markets, Richmond

Maryland

D. H. Willard, Marketing Specialist, University of Maryland, College Park
Ural C. Bee, Extension Service, University of Maryland, College Park
James B. Outhouse, Department of Animal Husbandry, University of Maryland

Pennsylvania

N. L. Claiborne, Pittsburgh Producers Co-op Association, Pittsburgh
Paul Abt, Pittsburgh Producers Co-op Association, Pittsburgh

Ohio

L. A. Kaufmann, Ohio Wool Growers Co-operative Association, Columbus
L. K. Bear, Sheep Specialist, Ohio State University, Columbus
Robert E. Rector, Producers Co-operative Commission Company, Columbus
C. W. Hammans, Extension Agricultural Marketing, Ohio State University
Don S. Bell, Experiment Station, Wooster
Stanley Marrs, Area Supervisor, Production and Marketing Administration, Columbus

West Virginia

J. Oliver Knapp, Director, Extension Service, West Virginia University
E. L. Shaw, Extension Sheep Specialist, West Virginia University
Herman Bowers, District Supervisor, Extension Service, West Virginia University
F. L. Miles, West Virginia Farm Bureau, Morgantown
Ross H. Tuckwiller, West Virginia Wool Marketing Association, Lewisburg
E. Clyde Bussard, Wool Manager, Minnehaha Springs
Robert W. Pitts, Commodity Services, Morgantown
Robert S. Boal, Extension Economist, West Virginia University
J. H. Clarke, Department of Agricultural Economics, West Virginia University
A. J. Anderson, Department of Agriculture, Charleston
Chas. V. Wilson, Department of Animal Husbandry, West Virginia University
Ben Morgan, Animal Husbandry, Extension Service, West Virginia University
J. H. Rietz, Animal Pathologist, West Virginia University

J. B. McLaughlin, Commissioner of Agriculture, Charleston
C. J. Cunningham, Wardensville
E. O. Gregory, Livestock Specialist, Charleston and Sutton
E. A. Livesay, Department of Animal Husbandry, West Virginia University
L. S. Hartley, Agricultural Agent, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Morgantown
Benj. F. Creech, Animal Husbandry Extension, West Virginia University

